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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000147

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB AND NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [RS](#) [IS](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN ASSISTANCE: LITHUANIA DISTURBED BY
RUSSIAN INVITATION TO HAMAS LEADERS

REF: STATE 21256

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Christian Yarnell
for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) We delivered reftel points regarding Palestinian assistance to Vaclovas Salkauskas, head of the MFA's Middle East Division, February 13. Salkauskas said that Lithuania agrees with the USG stance against assistance to a new Palestinian Authority government unless it renounces terrorism, recognizes Israel's right to exist, and accepts past agreements. He also noted that the GOL believes there is a strong EU consensus behind this position.

2. (C) Salkauskas expressed deep skepticism regarding Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent invitation to Hamas leaders to visit Moscow. He described Russia's outreach to Hamas as "unnecessary steps," and said he believes Russia is motivated by a base desire to advance its image as an international power broker, rather than by a true commitment to fostering peace in the region.
KELLY